

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8735

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1712

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GW

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: GALLAGHER AND DYKES

REF: BEIRUT 1704

1. ACTING PAO WAS WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS LAST NIGHT, FEB 24. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION HE WAS TOLD FOLLOWING:

(A) AN AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH PARTIES REPRESENTING THEMSELVES AS PEOPLE HOLDING GALLAGHER AND DYKES FOR EXCLUSIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW. THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

(B) PEOPLE HOLDING GALLAGHER AND DYKES GAVE CORRESPONDENT NUMEROUS DETAILS ON CONDITION OF MEN: THEY ARE IN HIGH SPIRITS AND PHYSICALLY FIT. THEY ARE ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO EACH OTHER AND TAKE SHORT WALKS THEY ARE SUPPLIED WITH AMPLE READING MATERIAL INCLUDING LETTERS FROM FAMILY. THEY HAVE RECEIVED CHRISTMAS PACKAGES. THEY HAVE GROWN BEARDS. THEY ARE BEING DETAINED IN A FIVE-STORY APARTMENT BUILDING NEAR THE CHIAH DISTRICT OF BEIRUT.

2. CAPTORS IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES TO CORRESPONDENTS AS BEING LEBANESE. CORRESPONDENT DESCRIBED THEM AS BEING INSIGNIFICANT LEFTIST GROUP.

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3. ABOVE RAISES STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT MEN WILL BE

EXPOSED TO NEWS MEDIA IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER PRIOR TO BEING TURNED OVER TO EMBASSY AS IN CASE OF COL. MORGAN. AGAINST THAT EVENTUALITY, ACTING PAO WHO WILL BE PICKING MEN UP ALONG WITH DATT WILL BE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME SORT OF STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF USG. RECOMMEND THIS STATEMENT BE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: QUOTE WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT GALLAGHER AND DYKES HAVE BEEN RELEASED (IN GOOD HEALTH). WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ASSISTED IN OBTAINING THEIR RELEASE. UNQUOTE.

4. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, ACTING PAO WILL NOT REPEAT NOT IDENTIFY OR GUESS AT IDENTIFY OF CAPTORS. HE WILL NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO OBTAINED THE RELEASE BUT WILL NOTE THAT USG HAS MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT, THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHERS (PERHAPS INCLUDING JUMBLATT IT IS SPECIFICALLY COMES UP) FOR THEIR RELEASE. IN REPLY TO QUESTION OF WHERE THEY ARE GOING NEXT, HE WILL LIMIT HIMSELF TO SAYING THEY WILL REJOIN THEIR FAMILIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES.

5. IF INFORMATION ABOVE IS REASONABLY CLOSE TO THE TRUTH, IT WOULD APPEAR GALLAGHER AND DYKES WILL BE ABLE TO TRAVEL COMMERICALLY IN COMPANY OF ONE OR TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR SPECIAL PLANE. EMBASSY WILL REQUEST PAO CURTISS TO RETURN FROM RHODES TO ATHENS BY EARLIEST MEANS AS SOON AS MEN HAVE BEEN RELEASED. AGAIN, REQUEST THAT NO REPEAT NO WORD OF THIS BE GIVEN TO MRS. GALLAGHER AND MRS. DYKES UNTIL RELEASE IS CONFIRMED BY THIS EMBASSY.
LAMBRAKIS

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